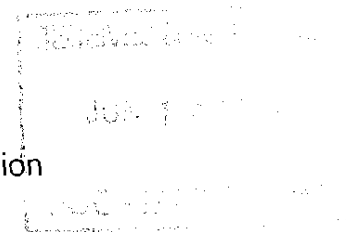




WILLIAM J. PANTELE
RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL
2ND DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE
900 EAST BROAD STREET, SUITE 200
RICHMOND, VA. U.S.A. 23219



Michael K. Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554



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WILLIAM J. PANTELE
CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE
SECOND DISTRICT

Michael K. Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Proceedings on Changes to Ownership Rules

Dear Chairman Powell:

I write to urge you to resist repeal or rollback of cross-ownership of media rules.

Permitting increased concentration of ownership presents significant threats to underlying tenets of our democracy. This is so because deregulation or rollback of concentration of ownership rules means that a few owners, domestic or foreign, may dominate our media markets.

A healthy democracy ought to embrace not only the ability to present views and perspectives, but meaningful and significant access to every media outlet that serves to communicate them as well. Our democracy, our Constitution and our Bill of Rights embrace the principle that speech, especially unpopular or challenging speech, should be fully aired and considered on its merits. After all, today's unpopular speech often becomes tomorrow's guiding principle. Simple access is not enough -- views and opinions may be excluded or restrained because of editorial control or by the power to set the broadcast agenda. Considered in that light, the wisdom of the important cross-ownership rules lies not in economic factors but in terms of safeguarding freedom. That is priceless, and irretrievable if lost.

The proper bias should be against restraint and in favor of diversity, in my view. Competition of ideas drove the birth of this country, and ideas will determine our future. Public policy should encourage more discussion and intellectual interaction. As I see it, permitting expansive cross-ownership of media will inexorably lead to more and more editorial control in the hands of fewer and more powerful titans.

I pray that you will consider these comments and protect the most valuable markets of all -- ideas.

Very truly yours,



William J. Pantele